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**Submission to the House of Representatives Primary Industries
and Resources Committee Inquiry Adapting Farming to Climate
Change**

We write to advise the Committee of our current research which examines climate change adaption and risk among Australian wheat farmers. Our research provides social and cultural perspectives on adaptation, illustrating how the new set of challenges presented by climate change might be understood and managed by Australian farmers.

Australian farmers have always had to deal with significant climatic variability, and we argue that they have many of the necessary skills and capacities to deal with the uncertainties of climate change. The failed harvests of 2006-07 and 2007-08 however, are unusual within living memory, and have provided a research opportunity to examine the social dimensions of adaptation to more frequent droughts, as are projected for parts of the wheat belt under climate change. During this period we have interviewed farmers across the NSW wheat belt to:

1) analyse different approaches to risk and climate variability; 2) analyse how farmers filter the risks they experience; and 3) analyse emerging attitudes to climate change and how this affects their decision making.

Our major findings suggest that 1) risk management varies widely amongst farmers which impacts how they deal with climate risk; 2) individual risk management strategies, while conscious of global processes, are embedded in the everyday lives of farmers; and 3) regardless of individual belief in climate change, climate risks are managed within an array, not separate to other risks.

Our original research is currently in peer review and due to copyright issues we are unable to provide draft manuscripts to the committee at this stage. However, we would welcome a future opportunity to discuss our research and its relevance to the inquiry.

Yours Sincerely,
Professor Lesley Head
Dr Jennifer Atchison
Dr Alison Gates

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